

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**April 7, 2011**  
**Bangs Community Center: Lower Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Rosemary Kofler, Kathy Koplow, Mary Jane Laus, Barbara Sutherland, Jack Wollensak

**Absent:** Juana Trujillo

**Select Board Liaison:** Stephanie O'Keeffe

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant)

**Guests:** John Musante, (Town Manager), Doris Holden (Treasurer of the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center), Barbara Slovin (President of the Friends), Judy Smith, Wendy Bloomenthal (Amherst Media), Scott Merzbach (Gazette Reporter), Alan Root.

**Welcome:** Dan Clapp, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the March 10, 2011 meeting were approved and accepted.

**FRIENDS**

**Treasurer's Report:**

**Doris** provided a handout showing \$12,610.91 in the checking account and \$82,208.99 in the investment account, plus a CD worth \$10,000.

The Treasurer's report was approved and accepted.

**Donations for FY11 to date:**

**Karen** stated that since July, 2010 the Friends has received \$12,184.70 of which \$9,429.81 came in just since the solicitation letter went out in the November newsletter. That number includes the \$1200 from the Florence Savings Bank Customer Choice Grant.

**Judy Smith** became involved with The Friends' accounting because of an audit several years ago. She has put records of the three Friends accounts on *Quick Books*. Judy presented a handout giving the total overview of Income and Expenses from each of the accounts. Total assets are \$109,889.07 as of March 24, 2011. There are no liabilities.

Profits and Losses for special activities are detailed. Equipment purchases are enumerated. Judy said she could provide this same type of report at each COA meeting if we choose, thereby relieving Doris of producing a separate report.

**Friends Update:**

**Barbara Slovin** reported. Another exciting Follies is coming on May 1. We are very fortunate to have Stephen Clapp, an award-winning violinist from the Julliard School this year. He will be accompanied by Professor of Music Nadine Shank of UMass. The Goodwin Gospel Choir will perform, along with Michelle Brooks, who recently won another contest, and several returning artists. Tickets are now on sale - \$10 for adults/\$7 for children. On Sunday, April 10 at 6 PM there will be a fundraising pasta supper at Bangs. Some of the Follies performers will give a preview of the show. A \$10 donation is requested. Our fundraising efforts are important as we look to the future needs in our growing senior community and envision a building that can meet those needs.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Amherst Media Opportunities:**

**Wendy Bloomenthal**, Community Outreach Coordinator, spoke. Amherst has three public cable channels for presenting local education and government issues. Wendy invited members to come and tour Amherst Media to see what resources are available. Amherst Media donated a large-screen TV to the Senior Center. They also videotape the Senior Health lecture series at Bangs. Those shows are available on demand. Recently Amherst Media set aside a block of time for senior living - Fridays from 6-8:00 PM and Saturdays from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM. Wendy encouraged us to use Amherst Media to promote the Follies. Amherst Media can't always provide staff to videotape senior center programs but they can train us to use the equipment and do the videotaping.

Amherst Media is partnering with UMass to embark on a formal on-line survey to collect data on who watches, local needs, etc. Wendy invited us to be part of the focus-group survey. She can be reached at 413-259-3306 or [wendy@amherstmedia.org](mailto:wendy@amherstmedia.org).

#### **COA Political Action Sub-Committee:**

**Nancy** says that the COA needs to find its voice. She would like a sub-committee to represent us, go to meetings such as WMACA (Western MA Association of COAs) or MCOA (Mass Council on Aging), to listen and weigh in. That sub-committee would make phone calls and send letters on special issues and be in touch with what is going on around the state. Such work is part of our mission and our responsibility as COA members. Joan Golowich has shown some interest in doing that.

**Joel** suggested alerting seniors who come to the Senior Center about political action issues and getting them to contact legislators.

#### **Highland Valley Home Delivered Meal Update:**

A letter (handout) from John Lutz was provided explaining the budget constraints and cost overruns regarding the noontime meal program. Nancy prefers to not make any changes for now. She does not want to jeopardize the health and safety of anyone. Following a recent Gazette article about the meal program, one of our drivers resigned because she felt the article inferred that the gas reimbursement of \$0.50 per mile that the drivers accepted was the problem. Nancy said the gas is only a piece of the problem. Nancy will meet with others to talk about ideas in the event that meal cuts become necessary in the future.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

#### **Parking Proposal Vote to Recommend to Select Board:**

**Jack** provided a handout describing the parking proposal as presented at the COA meeting in March. Claire McGinnis, Town Treasurer, supported the proposal. COA members read the proposal. Questions were answered. There will be no limit to the number of permits given out. It was proposed that this be a pilot program from July 1, 2011 – December 31, 2012.

**Stephanie** expressed concern that it may not mesh with the new Town parking system. She also reminded us that 14 spaces in the Boltwood lot would be taken away temporarily while Boltwood Place is being constructed (June through September).

**John Musante** described the new Town 'pay by space' system, which will begin in June. He agreed that the senior parking 'pilot period' could take place while all get comfortable with the new town system.

#### **A motion was made that the COA recommends to the Select Board that they adopt the Senior Center Parking Program on a trial basis.**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **Budget Update:**

**John Musante** said the budget will be finalized for recommendation to Town Meeting over the next 10 days. The list of prioritized items to be put back into the budget if the state aid cut is smaller than originally projected was reviewed by the Select Board and re-prioritized. If the cut is only \$650,000 instead of \$1.7 million, the \$4000 from the Friends to the Senior Center can be restored. We will know by April 14 what the House and Senate decide to do.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

#### **Nominating Committee Report:**

**Jack** reported. There are four members with first terms expiring – Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Juana Trujillo and Kathy Koplow. All have agreed to serve another term, although Kathy has other commitments that may prevent her from participating in some sub-committee activities. Rosemary

Kofler has completed her second term and according to the by-laws must have a one year absence before assuming another term. However, Nancy will propose to the Town Manager that Rosemary be allowed to continue. If a vacancy does occur, there are two applicants – Beverly Ziomek and Sue Dierks.

#### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**Joan and Barbara** reported on the Monday meeting. They visited the kitchen where noontime meals are prepared. John Lutz has had six complaints since his letter for eligibility was sent out. No cuts in delivery will be made until elders have been talked with. HVES will try to get more funding to cover their costs from the United Way of Hampshire County and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

**Maura** will look into whether the UMass MOW program would be able to provide noon meals more economically using the same amount of money that HVES receives for meals.

**Nancy** will meet tomorrow with other staff. They will talk about a letter to the drivers explaining the situation and then have a meeting with the drivers. A letter may also go out to all meal recipients discussing the situation.

#### **Long Range Planning:**

**Jack** reported. In response to the 2010 survey it was determined that more space was needed to meet the growing needs of elders in Amherst. The Town Manager supported the plan for a sub-committee to visit other senior/community centers in the state for ideas on improving the space at our senior center. Jack, Rosemary and Nancy have begun that process. Thus far, Jack has visited centers in Enfield, CT and Northampton. The object is to speak with the center director and learn about the services provided, the staffing, the building size and floor plan, the town's senior population and the number of visits per year to the senior center. What the staff likes and doesn't like about their center is also discussed. Centers in Groton, Glastonbury, Agawam, East Longmeadow, Belchertown and Shrewsbury will also be visited. The data will be discussed. We will focus on what we would like to have and a building proposal will be made to the Town Manager.

**John Musante** explained that he is in the midst of a Town-wide building needs assessment. He hopes to have a preliminary report by the end of summer. He encourages Nancy and the COA to look at other centers, identify desirable features, see how others use their space, look at how we can use our existing space more effectively and how we can share that space with other programs.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Nancy:**

The *Wisdom Works Job Training* program started this week. The three trainers and participants were pleased with the first session. The four-class program will be repeated every other month.

Security problems are an issue at Bangs and in all Town buildings. Behavior requirements and trespassing rules need to be more consistent. There will be a meeting at Bangs on Monday, April 11 at 12:30 PM with an officer from the police department on ways to improve our vigilance and security.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:53 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on May 5, 2011 at 9:00 AM at the Bangs Community Center.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the March 10, 2011 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.

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**Document List**

The following documents were made available to all members of the COA during the meeting. They are available for review at the Amherst Senior Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst MA.

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Minutes of March 10, 2011 meeting
3. Friends of the Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report
  - Profit and Loss, July 1, 2010 through March 24, 2011
  - Balance Sheet as of March 2011
  - Profit and Loss by Class, July 1. 2010 through March 24, 2011
4. Draft of *Senior Citizen Sticker Parking Program* for the Town of Amherst
5. Highland Valley Elder Services letter from Director John Lutz on meal program eligibility and budget issues
6. Subcommittee Report summaries